

Enclosure in No. 33.

(Minute No. 1981.)

Prime Minister's Office,

Bloemfontein, Orange River Colony, 11 May, 1909.

Ministers have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of His Excellency the Governor's minute, No. 572, of the 3rd instant, forwarding copy of a telegram from His Excellency the Governor of the Cape Colony, dated the 3rd instant, and to state that they have discussed with the Prime Ministers of the other South African Colonies the Secretary of State's invitation therein contained to representatives from the South African Governments to the Conference on the Naval and Military Defences of the Empire.

Ministers appreciate deeply the courtesy of His Majesty's Government in extending this invitation to this Government, and need not assure His Majesty's Government how anxious they are to accept it. It will, of course, be understood, as, indeed, the Secretary of State clearly anticipates, that it will not be possible for any of the self-governing South African Colonies, in view of the great political change now pending in South Africa, to take a very active part in such a Conference or to adhere to any policy which might seem to bind the Union Government which will so soon replace the present Colonial Governments.

Ministers, however, at the same time agree that the presence of South African representatives at the Conference will not only give it greater completeness but may help the future Union Government towards formulating some general scheme of South African defence which may as far as possible be in harmony with the systems prevailing in other parts of the Empire.

With reference to the question as to when delegates from this Colony could attend the Conference, Ministers have to state that it was the view of the Prime Ministers that the delegates from the South African Governments who have to go to London in connection with the passage of the South Africa Act through the British Parliament should leave South Africa at the end of June and so arrive in London in the middle of July. The members of the Governments who are on this Delegation could then make the necessary arrangements to attend also, as far as possible, the sittings of the Defence Conference.

A. FISCHER.

No. 34.

AUSTRALIA.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE to THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

(Sent 12.15 p.m., June 7, 1909.)

TELEGRAM.

(Confidential.)

June 7. Please convey to your Ministers the warm and very cordial thanks of His Majesty's Government for offer contained in your telegram of June 4.* They welcome the opportunity for consultation which will be afforded by the forthcoming conference on the defence of the Empire.—CREWE.

No. 35.

AUSTRALIA.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL to THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

(Received 8.35 a.m., 15 June, 1909.)

TELEGRAM.

Commonwealth of Australia will be represented Naval and Military Conference by Colonel Honourable J. Foxton, C.M.G., Honorary Minister.—DUDLEY.